

THE
PURITY
OF
GOSPEL COMMUNION,
OR,
GROUNDS and REASONS
FOR
Separation
FROM



Persons of Corrupt Manners, or that
hold Erroneous Doctrine in Mat-
ters of Faith essential to Salvation;
or that are guilty of False Wor-
ship, or irregular Administration
of Gospel Ordinances.

Briefly discussed to prevent the increase
of Sin and Disorder by a mixed Com-
munion in Church-Fellowship.

By *ISAAC MARLOW.*

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Grounds and Reasons
FOR
SEPARATION

From Persons of Corrupt Manners, &c.

WHEN the Lord of old brought up the Children of *Israel* out of the Land of *Egypt*, he separated them from other Nations, to be his People in a peculiar Covenant; and by his Laws he sanctified them from all Uncleanness; insomuch that whoso bore the Carcass of any unclean Beast, he was to wash his Cloaths and be unclean until the Even. And whoso touched the Body of a Dead Man, & purified not himself, he defiled the Tabernacle of the Lord; & that Soul was to be cut off from *Israel*, because the

Lev. 11.
24.
Lev. 5. 2, 3.
Ch. 11. 24,
&c.
Numb. 19.
11, 13.
Deut. 23.
10, to 19.

Water of Separation was not sprinkled upon
 Exod. 12. him. And whosoever eat the Passover with un-
 19. leavened Bread, or went unto the Holy things,
 Lev. 22. 3, having his uncleanness upon him; that Soul
 to 8. was to be cut off from the Congregation of Is-
 Numb. 15. rael, and from the presence of the Lord. And
 30, 31. the Soul that despised the Word of the Lord,
 and brake his Commandments, that Soul was
 utterly to be cut off, & his Iniquity should be
 upon him. Now those Separations and these,
 and many other legal cleansings were sha-
 dows of Gospel things, whereby the Purity
 of the New Testament Church was set forth.
 1 Pet. 2. 9. And to the end it should be a Royal Priest-
 hood, an Holy Nation, a peculiar People to
 shew forth the Praises of him, who hath called
 us out of darkness into his marvellous Light.
 He hath left us Holy Laws for the Govern-
 1 Cor. 5. 6, ment of his Church, and for the purging out
 7. of the old leaven of Unrighteousness, for
 Gal. 5. 9. a little leaven leaveneth the whole Lump, as
 it consequently follows; that such who bear
 with Sin in one, cannot avoid bearing it in
 another; and by opening of this Sluce, a Flood
 of Sin and Iniquity will quickly sweep away
 the beauty of a Gospel Church; and turn the
 Jer. 2. 21. noble Vine that was planted wholly a right
 seed, into the degenerate plant of a strange
 Vine, to the dishonour of God, the reproach
 of true Religion, the stumbling of weak
 Christians and the hardning of one another in
 their Sins, and Disobedience against the most
 Sovereign Majesty of Heaven and Earth. To
 prevent which evils, I shall therefore Treat
 of

of the way and means appointed by Christ, who loved the Church, and gave himself for it: That he might sanctifie and cleanse it with the washing of Water, by the Word. That he might present it to himself a glorious Church; not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that we should be holy, and without blame before him in Love. And in order thereunto, I shall here Premise, that forasmuch as the Church of Christ is said to be the pillar and ground of Truth, And that it is Gods building: It cannot be so, unless it be erected according to the Pattern shewed in the Holy Mount and recorded for the Example of after Ages. That every stone should be a lively Stone by Regeneration, built up together a spiritual house in one most Holy Faith; for as there is one Body and one Spirit, so there is one Faith: And it is the Duty of every Christian to help build up Gods spiritual Temple, according to the pure Primitive and Apostolical Pattern, and to this end they should come out from among them and be separate, and joyn themselves to such a Congregation of Believers, where they may continue together in the Apostles Doctrine and Fellowship, (tho' not personally with them) and in breaking of Bread, and in Prayers. For the Church of Christ should not be a mixed Building (tho' on Christ the true Foundation) as the Apostle warneth us saying, *Ye are Gods building, according to the Grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise Master-builder, I have laid*

Eph. 1. 4.
Ch. 5. 25,
26, 27.
Tit. 2. 14.

1 Tim. 3.

15.

1 Cor. 3. 9.

Heb. 8. 5.

1 Pet. 2. 4,

5.

Eph. 2. 20,

21, 22.

Ch. 4. 4, 5.

Jude 20.

2 Cor. 6.

16, 17.

1 Cor. 3. 9,

10, 11.

The Introduction.

the Foundation, and another buildeth thereon, but let every Man take heed how he buildeth thereupon; for other Foundation can no man lay, then that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this Foundation, Gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble: Every mans work shall be made manifest — and the fire shall try every mans work, of what sort it is. If any mans work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any mans work shall be burnt, he shall suffer loss.

So that the Gospel Church is not to be formed of such mixed and combustible matter as men please, but of pure Gold, yea of such as is tryed in the Fire. But to proceed,

Rev. 3. 18. *First*, I shall prove, that it is the Duty of a Church of Christ to withdraw their Communion from, yea, and to purge out those Persons that are (without Repentance for it) guilty of corrupt Manners or evil Actions; and that not only for committing the grosser sort of Sins, as Fornication or incestuous Marriages, Blasphemy or other notorious Evil, but for smaller offences. And first our Lord hath commanded

1 Cor. 5. 1.
to 6.
1 Tim. 1.
20.

Math. 18. us saying, If thy Brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: If he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy Brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the Mouth of two or three Witnesses every Word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the Church: but if he neglect

Of Non Communion, &c.

neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as an Heathen Man and a Publican. To which I shall only here say, that as this trespass mentioned in the Text, must be some breach of the Moral Law, in not doing to others, as we would that others should do to us; because it is a trespass against a Brother: So it is plain, that for such a cause of doing wrong, if satisfaction be not given by Repentance, the offender should be unto us as an Heathen Man and a Publican, with whom it was not lawful to hold any Church Communion, unless they were converted. Mat. 7. 12

2. It is said, 2 Thes. 3. 6. Now we command you, Brethren, in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw your selves from every Brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the Tradition which he received of us. Here we have a general command to withdraw from all disorderly Persons, which because I design to open it more at large in some following part of this Treatise, I shall at present only note this Scripture, as a positive Law to preserve the Purity of Church Communion, and the Words of our Lord before recited are for the same end, tho' they more particularly respect corrupt Manners, or immoral Wrongs and offences of Brethren against Brethren; comprehending a Prohibition of lesser as well as grosser Evils, as appears from the Authority of other Scriptures, *Exod. 23. 1. Thou shalt not raise a false report, nor not shine hand with the Wicked to be an un-* Math. 18
15, &c.

Psal. 15. 2. *righteous Witnesses.* And David shews us, who
 3. shall abide in the Lords Tabernacle, and
 who shall dwell in his Holy Hill: *He that*
walketh uprightly — he that backbiteth not with
his Tongue, nor doeth evil to his Neighbour,
nor taketh up a reproach against his Neighbour,
 &c. And Psalm 101. 5. *Whoso privily slan-*
dereth his Neighbour, him will I cut off. And
 the Apostle saith, Rom. 3. 8. *And not rather*
as we be slanderously reported, and as some as-
firm that we say, let us do evil, that good may
come? whose Damnation is Just. And in
 2 Thes. 3. 11, to 15. we are commanded
 to have no company with such, as through
 Idleness eat not their own Bread, but are
 busie Bodies. And 1 Cor. 5. 7, 8. *Purge out*
therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new
Lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ
 our Passover is sacrificed for us. Therefore let
 us keep the Feast, not with old leaven, neither
 with the leaven of malice and wickedness: And
 ver. 11. He saith, *I have written unto you,*
not to keep Company, if any man that is called a
Brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an Ido-
later, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extor-
tioner, with such an one not to eat. And in
 Set also Gal. 5. 19, 20, 21. *Now the works of the flesh*
 1 Cor. 6. 9. *are manifest, which are these, Adultery, for-*
 10. *nication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry,*
 1 Tim. 1. *witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulation, wrath,*
 9, 10. *strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders,*
 Col. 3. 9. *drunkenness, revellings and such like, (as all*
hyars, Rev. 21. 8.) of the which I tell you be-
fore, as I have also told you in time past, that
 they

they which do such things, shall not inherit the Kingdom of God. And then surely none of those evils (tho' of the lesser sort of them) when known to us should be suffered in the Communion of a Gospel Church. And in *Math. 7. 12.* Therefore all things whatsoever, ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the Law and the Prophets. So that whatsoever wrong is done to any contrary to this general precept, it is a breach of the Moral Law, *Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thy self.* And therefore such Offenders should not (without Repentance for their Sin) be suffered in our Holy Communion at the Lords Table. *Math. 19.*

But some may think that all those particular evils, in *Gal. 5. 19, 20, 21.* come not under the Cognizance and Judgment of the Church for excluding of those who are guilty of them from Communion. To which I shall briefly say, That tho' there may be some kind of immoral Variance, Emulation, Wrath and Strife, that may not arise to so high an offence, if they be only suddain passions that are soon over, yet where there is a fixed Variance between Brethren, that shews it self to proceed from immorality; Or Emulation from a striving to exceed in Envy, or Disdain, or in Wrong to another; or malicious anger without a cause, there we have ground for Exclusion from Communion, as our Saviour saith, *Who-so ever is angry with his Brother without a cause, shall be in danger of the Judgment.* — Therefore if *Mat. 5. 22, to 25.*

if thou bring thy Gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy Brother hath ought against thee; leave there thy Gift before the altar, and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy Brother, and then come and offer thy Gift. These Words (notwithstanding there are some old Testament Terms used) were spoken for Direction to us under the Gospel, for Christ in this Sermon was Gospelizing the Law, And therefore I gather from them, that in Case a Person trespasseth against his Brother, he should not offer his spiritual Gift in publick Church Worship, till he hath reconciled himself to him; and then it consequently follows, that the same trespass which debars him from offering his Gift upon the Altar, whatever is meant by it, does also debar him from his full Communion at the Lords Table. And seeing from this Scripture, he ought of himself to forbear his Communion, till he be reconciled; there is likewise Reason for the offended Brother or the Church if the Case be known to it, to forbear his Communion with him or withdraw it from him, till he giveth satisfaction by Repentance for the same immoral Trespass, which forfeits his present Priviledge to Minister in publick Church Worship, does also forfeit his Priviledge of Communion with it at the Lords Table. Moreover it is worth our Observation, that the Word [*Therefore*] *if thou bring thy Gift to the Altar*, refers the Reason of this Exclusion from Communion, to the Evils in the foregoing Verse

as the cause thereof, which is for being *Angry* with a Brother without a cause, for saying to his Brother *Raca*, that is, dull, blockish, or vain, or thou fool, in disdain, reproach and envy. So that as on the one hand we are forbidden on forfeiture of our Church Communion, to cast contempt reproach and scorn upon any Brother, for his weakness in the Faith, or for his natural Infirmities, and to bear a fixed anger without a cause: So on the other side, nothing is here intended by our Saviour, to forbid an intelligible expressing of our Detestation and Abhorrence of that which is Evil as we are commanded, and as also we are allowed to use a holy Indignation and Revenge against all disobedience, yet so as to consist with Love and Pity to Mens Persons.

See *Dutch Annot.*

Rom. 12. 9.

2 Cor. 7.

11.

Ch. 10. 6.

3. Under this Head of Discourse concerning corrupt Manners or evil Actions, we may bring many other particular Cases, for which Offenders ought to be withdrawn from, and without Repentance for their Sin, they should not be suffered in the Communion of the Visible Church of Christ. As 1. For breaking the Christian Sabbath in disobedience to the Fourth Commandment, and the Example of Christs Apostles, and the Primitive Churches. 2. For being disobedient to Parents and Masters in Lawful and Reasonable things. Eph. 6. 1, 2, 5. 3. For a Rebellious breaking Covenant with a Church of Christ, when it is not in Case of Conscience, of Moral Necessity, nor of real Expediency.

Gal. 5. 19, 21. *pediency.* 4. For taking the Holy Name of the Lord our God in vain. 5. For Lasciviousness (mentioned before) which is Lecherousness or Wantonness in Behaviour, and for many other Sins, some of which are particularly expressed, and others are included under the general Head of Trespasses against the Moral Law.

2 Tim. 3. 2, to 6.

Secondly, It is the Duty of Christians to withdraw their Communion in Church Fellowship from all those that hold erroneous Doctrine in or against Matters of Faith Essential to Salvation. For

2 Tim. 2. 22.

1. We are commanded to follow Righteousness, Faith, Charity, Peace with them that call on the Name of the Lord out of a pure Heart; but such as Err in fundamentals of Salvation, thereby declare their Hearts to be unwashed with Regeneration, and the Renewings of the Holy Ghost, and therefore we should not hold our Communion with such at the Lords Table.

2. It farther appears to be the Duty of Christians to separate themselves from the Communion of all those that hold such Erroneous Doctrine, Col. 2. 20. *Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the Rudiments of the World; why, as tho' living in the World, are ye subject to Ordinances. Touch not, taste not, handle not; (which all are to perish with the using) after the Commandments and Doctrines of Men; which things have indeed a shew of Wisdom in Will, worship and Humility, and neglecting of the Body, not in any Honour, to the satisfying*

rising of the Flesh. Here I shall observe, that the Apostle having in the foregoing part of this Chapter, warned the *Colossians* against the Traditions of Men, and the Rudiments of the World, *viz.* to beware of Philosophy and vain Deceit of the Jewish Ceremonies, and other voluntary Worship and Humility; he delivers them a general command, that they should not *Touch, Taste,* nor *Handle,* *viz.* no ways to meddle with that which others perish with the using after the Commandments and Doctrines of Men, tho' others use them; yet we are strictly prohibited in the least to Touch or Taste of their practical Ordinances, or of their Doctrines, for these also are there forbidden, because the command hath a reference to the Rudiments of the World, which *Vn. 20.* signifieth the first Teaching or Instruction, a beginning a Principle, and hath respect to Matters of Faith. Seeing therefore we *Vn. 3. to* are forbidden to Touch, Taste or Handle *10.* the Commandments and Doctrines of Men; then surely we ought not to be in full Communion at the Lords Table, with Persons that hold such Erroneous Principles; for our Assenting to their right of Communion with us, is an owning their Principles as truly fundamental to Salvation; and so we either virtually deny our own to be such, or confound the true Profession of our Faith to the hazard of Mens Souls; or else admit of Persons to partake of the Holy Supper, that apparently have no right to it, for want of those

those Gospel Principles that are essential to their visible Interest, in the Obedience, Sufferings, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ, either of which is a Sin.

3. It appears from *Gal. 1. 6, 7, 8.* that we should not hold Communion at the Lords Table, with Persons that hold such erroneous Principles; for the Apostle saith, *I marvel, that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the Grace of Christ, unto another Gospel: Which is not another, but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the Gospel of Christ. But tho' we, or an Angel from Heaven, preach any other Gospel unto you, than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed: And in the following Verse, he repeats it over again; and in Chap. 5. 12. he saith, I would they were even cut off which trouble you.* Now if we duly search after the Cause of this censure, we may plainly see that it was not for bringing in of another Gospel; but as the Apostle saith, because there were some that troubled the Church of *Galatia* with perverting the Gospel of Christ, by
Gal. 6. 12.
Chap. 5. 3. constraining them to be circumcised; and so to become Debtors to do the whole Law. And we find by the Apostles Discourse, that
Chap. 2. &c. they sought to be justified by the Works of the Law, as *Chap. 2. 16.* *Knowing that a man is not justified by the Works of the Law, but by the Faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ; that we might be justified by the Faith of Christ, and not by the Works of the Law: for by the Works of the Law shall no*
Flesh

Flesh be justified. And Chap. 4. 21. Tell me, ye that desire to be under the Law, do ye not hear the Law? So that the perverting of the Gospel before mentioned, was by bringing in of the Works of the Law for Justification; and this we find was made a Matter of Separation, the Apostle wishing the Persons even cut off or accursed, that so troubled the Church of Christ, which to apply to some in our present day, I shall here note, that altho' those Jewish Christians that held it needful to be circumcised, and so endeavoured to bring the *Gentiles* under the Law for Justification to Eternal Life, did it in a Mosaic formal way, which Christians now repugn, by denying that formal Obligation to keep the old Law; yet as their Principles oblige them to seek for Justification by works of Obedience to a new Law under the Gospel, which they have no Power in themselves to perform, their Principle with the case of the Church of *Galatia*, respecting the effect, is in substance the same; and therefore there is Reason founded on Scripture for us to withdraw or remove our Communion from all Persons that are leavened with the works of the Law for Justification; whether it be under the form of the Law or of the Gospel Administration: For that being called Leaven, seeing *Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us*, we are commanded (tho' on a different occasion) to keep the Feast not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wicked-

Gal. 5. 9.

1 Cor. 5. 8.

wickedness; but with the unleavened Bread of Sincerity and Truth. Observe it well, we are here forbidden to eat the Christian Passover or Lords Supper with the old leaven, &c. and are commanded to keep it with Truth. And therefore we should not have Communion in that Ordinance with fundamental Errors in the Christian Faith.

4. The Apostle saith, Rom. 16. 17. Now I beseech you, Brethren, Mark them which cause Divisions and Offences, contrary to the Doctrine which ye have Learned; and
 1 Tim. 6. 3; avoid them. And Paul commanded Timothy to withdraw from such as taught otherwise, and consented not to wholesome Words, even the Words of our Lord Jesus Christ; and to the Doctrine which is according to Godliness, &c. And we are exhorted earnestly to contend for the Faith which was once delivered unto the Saints: And to stand fast in
 Jude 3. one Spirit, with one Mind, striving together for the Faith of the Gospel; and therefore we are not to unite our selves into one Body with Persons, that erre from the true Faith; for
 Phil. 1. 27. as two cannot walk together except they be agreed, so if we are not united in one Faith, we shall quickly be contending and striving with each other, and not together for the Faith of the Gospel.

5. It is said by way of Positive Command,
 Tit. 3. 10, A Man that is an Heretick, after the first and
 11. second Admonition, reject: Knowing that he that is such, is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself. Now an Heretick is
 one

one that stiffly maintains false opinions against the Scriptures, in matters of Faith fundamental to Salvation; which tho' we should be tender of judging such Christians to be Hereticks, as there is Reason to hope have more the shew in weak expressions of some such like false Principles, than a being under the Power and Conduct of them; seeing the Scripture saith, we should of some Jude 22. have Compassion, making a difference; and others save with fear pulling them out of the Fire, having even the garment spotted by the Flesh. Yet our Charitable Thoughts of such Christians, while they are under their cloudy Profession of such Errours (tho' crouded amongst other Truths, whereby they are the more concealed) are no warrant nor allowance for us to hold Communion with them, till we can plainly see them delivered from those Errours, seeing they are clearly prohibited in the Scriptures.

Thirdly, It is the Duty of Christians to withdraw their Communion from all disorderly Persons in false Worship, or in corrupt Administrations of Gospel-Ordinances, And

1. Our Lord saith, *The hour cometh, and now is, when the true Worshippers shall worship the Father in Spirit and in Truth: For the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in Spirit and in Truth.* From hence I observe, that true Worshippers must worship the Father both in Spirit and in Truth, otherwise

1 Joh. 4.1.

Jude 19.

Mat. 15.9.

Isa. 29.19.

therwise they are not true Worshippers: And then if we find by the Word of Truth (as we are commanded to try the Spirits, whither they are of God) that they are such *who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit*, or that do not worship in Truth, but with erroneous Matter, or in a false Manner: I say, then we should withdraw our Communion from such, as disorderly Persons in Divine Worship: And our Lord also tells us, that in vain they do worship him, teaching for Doctrines the Commandments of Men. So that to keep our selves from the Guilt of vain Worship, we should not by our selves, nor with any others worship God after the Commandment of Men, but according to Gospel-Institutions.

See his
Book called
A Sober
Discourse
of right to
Church-
Communi-
on, in his
Preface.

2. The Apostle saith, 1 Cor. 11. 2. *I praise you, Brethren, that you remember me in all things, and keep the Ordinances, as I delivered them to you*: On this Text Mr. Will. Kiffin noteth, "That our Translation of the Greek Word *μεμνησθαι* (rendring it *Ordinances*) is excepted against by some Papists — who would have it translated (*Traditions*) to countenance the Romish Opinion; to which (saith he) shall be opposed, that the Greek Word signifieth indeed *Tradition*, that is in English, a Delivery, viz. of Doctrines, Ordinances, Instructions, or Institutions, 2 Thes. 2. 15. by those Evangelical Preachers to their Auditors, which is nothing else but the Doctrine of the Gospel first preached," ed,

ed, and afterwards committed to writing
 "by the Evangelists and Apostles, as stand-
 "ing Records to future Ages, so that any
 "Traditions, besides what is written, are
 "justly to be excepted against, and (in
 "matters relating to Divine Worship) to
 be esteemed Apocryphal. Now as the afore-
 said Author saith, "What was praise-wor-
 "thy in those *Primitive* Christians, to
 "whom the Apostle *Paul* writes, — can
 "be no blemish, but really a Duty in other
 "Christians in after times, to imitate.
 To which I add, That to corrupt the wor-
 ship of God with mens Traditions, contra-
 ry to the Apostolical Pattern, is a Sin and
 Disorder to be purged out by the Church
 of Christ ; as farther appears in the next
 Section.

3. It's said, *2 Thes. 3. 6.* Now we com-
 mand you, Brethren, in the Name of our Lord
Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw your selves from
 every Brother that walketh disorderly, and not
 after the Tradition which he received of us.

1. This general Command to the Church
 of the *Thessalonians*, appears from the fol-
 lowing Verses, to be occasioned from some
 particular disorders that were amongst
 them, (as *Ver. 11, 12, 14, 15.* For even
 when we were with you, this we commanded you,
 that if any would not work, neither should he
 eat. For we hear that there are some which
 walk among you disorderly, working not at all,
 but are busie bodies. Now them that are such
 we command, and exhort by our Lord *Jesus*
 B 2 Christ,

Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own Bread. — And if any Man obey not our Word by this Epistle, note that Man, and have no Company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an Enemy, but admonish him as a Brother.) But yet this instance left us on sacred Record, may give us light into other Cases; for seeing we are commanded to withdraw our Communion, so as to have no Company with such a disorderly Brother, that through Idleness (when he may have work) eateth not his own Bread, and is a busie body (who may have this to plead against such an Act of the Church, that he hath not stolen nor defrauded any, but getteth his Meat from House to House amongst his Christian Friends) then there is ground and command for us to withdraw our selves from all those that offend in other things of the like Nature, and that are guilty of fraud or deceit and wrong to any Person. And that this command in *Ver. 6.* is general, including all disorders in Manners, Doctrine, and false Worship, and so is a Confirmation of all I have said before for proof thereof, appears as followeth.

1. Because in *Ver. 7, 8.* there is a plain Intimation, that the command, *Ver. 6. To withdraw from every Brother that walketh disorderly,* does respect other disorders besides the particular Case of eating other Mens Bread for nought. For the Apostle saith, *Ver. 7, 8. Your selves know how ye ought to fol-*
low

low us: for we behaved not our selves disorderly among you, neither did we eat any Mans Bread for nought. Observe the Word [Neither] imports a different disorder to what he implied before in Opposition to his Example: So that to me it's plain, that the command in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, was to withdraw from those disorders that were contrary to the Apostles examples, and which were not after the Tradition which they received of them, and therefore it is a general command, as was said before.

2. I shall give a brief Citation, of what is said on the same Text in a Book intituled, *A sober Discourse of Right to Church Communion*, in Page 5. it's said, quoting 2 *Thes.*

3. 6. Now we command you Brethren, in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw your selves from every Brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the Tradition which he received of us. " Which last Phrase

" *παράδοσις* (the Word [Paradosis] signifying not only Doctrine delivered, *Math.*

" 15. 2, 3. but also a Command, Ordinance or Institution, as before, 2 *Thes.* 2. 15.)

" plainly makes out, that they were not only to withdraw from Persons of disorderly Conversation, or defective in Mo-

" rals, but also from such as were corrupt in Doctrine, or disorderly in their Gospel

" Administrations, that being as great a

" Violation of Gospel Order, and as pernicious to Christians as Immorality:

" Which must be granted, or else there

Written by
Mr. Will.
Kiffin.

“ is no Authority given to the Church to
 “ deal with Members of corrupt Principles,
 “ &c.

“ Now this Command (saith he) being
 “ general, includes all disorders of any
 “ kind, in Manners, Doctrine, or Practice,
 “ and is a sufficient warrant (were there
 “ no more) for our Obedience, to ex-
 “ clude such as disorderly practise the Or-
 “ dinance of Baptism, from our immediate
 “ Communion at the Lords Table, tho’
 “ not from our Love and Affections.

Having hitherto been discovering the
 Scripture Grounds of Separation from
 Church Communion with all disorderly
 Persons, in Manners, Doctrine, false Wor-
 ship or irregular Administrations of Gospel
 Ordinances, I shall now proceed as follow-
 eth:

1. To Answer the chiefest Objections I
 find against such Gospel Separation.
2. To give a particular Instance of some
 confused Matter about Communion, already
 Printed amongst us with several Queries
 thereupon.
3. I shall present my humble Advice to
 some of our Baptized Churches. And
4. I shall leave some few things to the
 serious Consideration of those that have re-
 ceived a Gracious Discovery of the Love
 and Favour of God unto their Souls, or
 that have good Hope thro’ Grace of Eter-
 nal Life; and yet are walking at large out
 of the Communion of a Gospel Church : As
 also

also an Exhortation in another Case concerning Gospel Communion.

Lastly in a Postscript, I have shewed, that it is the Duty of all true Believers in Order to Church Communion, to subject themselves to the Ordinance of Water Baptism, and have also discoursed against excess of apparel, and then made a general Conclusion of this Treatise.

Objections Answered.

I. *Object.* None of the seven Churches of *Asia* in the Epistles, to them were commanded to withdraw their Communion, or separate themselves from any of those Persons among them, which the Holy Ghost charged with Evil. And therefore neither Churches from any of their Members, nor any Members from their Churches, should separate themselves from one anothers full Communion at the Lords Table, unless it be for gross and scandalous Evils.

*Rev. Chap.
2. Chap. 3.*

Answer: If this Argument holdeth good and warrantable for Persons and Churches to keep their Communion at the Lords Table, under the Guilt and Non-repentance of lesser Evils; it will also justifie such Communion with those that are guilty of grosser Sins. For the Church of *Pergamos* had them that held the Doctrine of *Balaam*, who taught *Balak* to cast a stumbling block before the Children of *Israel*, to eat things sacrificed unto Idols, and to commit Fornication.

Ch. 2. 14.

And this was also the Sin of the Church in *Thyatira*, to whom its said, *That unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this Doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak, I will put upon you none other burthen. But that which you have already hold fast till I come.* And therefore, seeing the Church of *Thyatira* suffered that Woman *Jezebel* to seduce the Servants of Christ, to commit Fornication, and to eat things sacrificed to Idols (which must be meant in honour to them, for otherwise Meats sacrificed to Idols were not unlawful to eat, tho' sometimes not expedient for the sake of weak Brethren) then surely the rest that escaped those Pollutions, and had no other burthen put upon them, than to hold fast that they had already, cannot rationally be thought then to be in the same Communion with those Idolaters and Fornicators, for such have no Inheritance in the Kingdom of God. Besides, we have an Instance of a Fornicator that was separated from the Church, or delivered up unto Satan. So that tho' there is no express command in the Epistles to those seven Churches of *Asia*, for withdrawing their Communion from any evils mentioned therein; yet doubtless it was their Duty from other Precepts then written, to cast out those that were guilty of such notorious Sins, as were in some of those Churches: And those Christians of *Thyatira*, which the Holy Ghost commended, that were in the same City with those that

Ver. 24, 25.

Ver. 20.

1 Cor. 8. 9.

10.

Ch. 10. 27.

28, 29.

Gal. 5. 19,
20, 21.1 Cor. 5. 2,
4, 5.

that were reprov'd (and perhaps originally in full Communion together in one Body) it is rational to believe were separated from their Communion, for Dr. Hammond in his Margin reads in *Ver. 24.* thus: But unto [you, I say the rest] in *Thyatira*, &c. for the Kings, *M. S.* reads it so *, which imports another distinct Church or People in that City. And the Reason why Christ threatned those defiled Christians, which were the Church to whom the Epistle was primarily directed, was because they suffered those evils, when they should have purged out such Offenders, as the Church of *Ephesus* did, for what else can be meant by those Words: *I know thy Works — how thou canst not bear them which are Evil: and thou hast tried them, which say they are Apostles, and are not; and hast found them liars,* who were therefore doubtless rejected from their Communion. But if any say, that these Words, *thou canst not bear them which are evil,* have only respect to the following Words. *And thou hast tryed them, which say they are Apostles, and are not; and hast found them liars:* I have this to Answer, 1. That if it were so, yet it shews that this Church did not bear with such Lyars in their Communion, otherwise they could not be properly commended for not bearing with them. 2. The Word [and] *thou hast tryed them,* &c. implieth a particular different thing, or other Persons to those preceding Words in general: And

* *ὅμω δὲ λέγει λόγους.*
See also the Bibles Printed by the Deputies of Christ. Barker, 1599. and by Robert Barker, 1607. Ch. 2. 2.

how

how thou canst not bear them which are evil; like as we find in the same Verse, that the Word [*and*] *thy Labour*, [*and*] *thy Patience*, denoteth different things to each other, and particulars of the general Word (*I know thy*) [*Works.*] So that the Text does clearly demonstrate, that the Church of *Ephesus* did neither bear those that were Evil, nor those false Apostles in their Communion, which Exposition is confirmed by the *Dutch Annotations* on those Words, *and how thou canst not bear them which are evil*, that is, say they, *such as are scandalous in Life and Doctrine.* Thus their Zeal is commended here in the Exercise of Ecclesiastical Discipline. So that the aforesaid Objection, That none of the seven Churches of *Asia*, were commanded in their Epistles to separate themselves from any of those Persons, which the Holy Ghost charged with evil, is invalid. And considering also, that his silence may be improved (if we give ear to such a groundless Argument) for holding Communion with grosser as well as lesser Sins; we have Reason to believe, that some of those Churches and Christians, that were concerned in those Epistles (from the Authority of some other part of the Holy Scriptures) did separate themselves from those offenders, that by the Laws of Christ they were not to bear in their Communion. And that those Churches, who suffered themselves to be polluted, through the neglect of their Duty in bearing with those evils

evils they should have purged out, did thereby bring themselves under the anger and displeasure of God for it, as appears in their Epistles.

II. *Object.* Is from *Phil. 3. 15, 16.* *Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. Nevertheless, whereso we have already attained, let us walk by the same Rule, let us mind the same Thing.*

That these Words give no allowance for any to hold a corrupt Communion, is very plain, because the Apostle is not here arguing to prove the Resurrection of the Dead, or any fundamental Article of our Faith, or on any essential part of Divine Worship, or of such practical Obedience, as that the failure thereof is to be noted as disorderly walking: But he is Treating in the preceding Verses, that he had not attained, but was following after the Resurrection-state of Perfection, and of his pressing towards the Mark, for the Prize of the high Calling of God in Christ Jesus; and then it follows,

Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. As if he should say, Let us there-

fore, as many as be [perfect] that is, as are not [babes] in Christ, that have need of [Milk] but are [strong Men] of [full Age] [skilful] in the Word of Righteousness, who by Reason of use have their Senses exercised to discern both good and evil. Per-

fect,

1 Cor. 9. 1.

1 Joh. 2.

14.

Heb. 5. 12.

13, 14.

1 Cor. 2. 6.

2 Tim. 3. 17. *perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good Works. Perfect and compleat in all the Will of God.*
 Col. 4. 12. *To be able to comprehend with all Saints, what*
 Jam. 3. 2. *is the breadth, and length, and depth, and*
 Eph. 3. 18, 19. *height; and to know the Love of Christ, which passeth Knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.* Now consider, that

as we cannot know that which passeth Knowledge, but as the Apostle saith, we
 1 Cor. 13. 12. know in part, and as none but Christ was ever filled with all the fulness of the Perfection of God; but of the Knowledge of his Will, and Love to us in all its parts necessary to a Holy Life of Faith, the true Worship of God and Eternal Life: So if any came short of this kind of Perfection, the Apostle told them, God should reveal even this unto them. And therefore the Text does not any ways prohibit a Separation from such afore said Errours, that are noted in Holy Writ, as disorders in Manners, Doctrine or Worship. But it containeth a comfortable Promise to those that are rather free from them; that tho' they are weak in Faith, and Babes in the Knowledge of Christ, yet sincerely minding the some things which according to Rule they have attained to, and labouring
 2 Pet. 3. 18. to grow in Grace, and in the Knowledge of Christ, they shall have in due Season a more full discovery of that perfect Love, which casteth out fear, and of the Will of God in the Revelation of the Gospel, and shall be built up in their most Holy Faith from

from a babe-like-state to a perfect Man in Christ Jesus, in some Scripture Sense. So that there is nothing in the Text, that implieth a Prohibition of Separation in the aforesaid Cases of corrupt Manners, Erroneous, Doctrine, false Worship, or irregular Administrations of Gospel Ordinances.

III. *Object.* Is from, 1 Pet. 4. 8. and Math. 18. 21, 22. *And above all things have fervent Charity among your selves: for Charity shall cover a Multitude of Sins.* And Peter said, Lord, How oft shall my Brother Sin against me; and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus said unto him, I say not unto thee; until seven times: but, until seventy times seven; from which Scriptures, some may think that Christians should bear with Sins in Communion with one another, and cover them all in Love.

Answer, Our Lord himself shews plainly us, what is meant by those Scriptures, Luke 17. 3. *Take heed to your selves: If thy Brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent, thou shalt forgive him.* From whence it appears, 1. That we are to rebuke our Brother for his Trespass. 2. To forgive him, but mind it well, it must be if he return and repenteth; he must turn again as well as say he repenteth; and so tho' Charity should cover a multitude of Sins, that

that are turned from and repented of, yet it should cover none from the Church which ought to come under her Cognizance, for our Charity should consist with our Obedience to the Precepts of Christ.

IV. *Object.* It is said, *Rebuke not an Elder*, and therefore there should be a difference between dealing with an Elder of a Church and a private Member, for Sin.

1 Tim. 4.
12.

Answer. The Apostle Paul in this Epistle to Timothy, saith, *Let no Man despise thy Youth.* And in Chap. 5. 1, 2. he exhorteth him saying, *Rebuke not an Elder, but intreat him as a Father, and the younger Men as Brethren; the Elder Women as Mothers, the younger as Sisters with all Purity.* And Chap. 3. 14, 15. *These things write I unto thee, — that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thy self in the House of God.* In these Scriptures the Apostle instructed Timothy, that young Servant of Christ, and in him others, how they should behave themselves, in reproving not only Elders, but younger Brethren and Sisters; that as an Elder Bishop or Pastour, which is the same in Office, should not be [*soon angry*] so Timothy, and others should not in an angry Spirit rebuke either Elders or younger Brethren and Sisters, but rather reprove them by intreaties. It's true, it's also said, *Let the Elders that Rule well, be counted worthy of double Honour:* But yet by Sin, they may lose and justly forfeit their double and single Honour too; for it's said, *Against an Elder*

Ver. 19. 20,
21.

receive not an Accusation, but before (or as it is in our Margin under) two or three witnesses. Them that Sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear: I charge thee before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Elect Angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality. So that it seems to be implied, that the Christians in those Primitive times were so zealous to preserve the Reputation of the Gospel-Ministry, and the Purity of their Communion; as that they were ready to receive an Accusation against an Elder sooner, and on lesser evidence than against a private Member; insomuch as the Apostle thought it needful, to charge them not to receive an Accusation against an Elder, under the legal Evidence of two or three Witnesses. Moreover, we see how strictly the Apostle charged *Timothy*, that he should not use partiality in any Case of Sin, to prefer one before another, whether Elders (as there were sometimes several in one Church) or private Members; but them that sinned should be rebuked before all, *i. e.* those whose Sins could not be privately covered for want of their Repentance, they whoever they were should be rebuked before all, *viz.* so as the rebuke should reach as openly as the Sins were known, and that others might also fear. And therefore, there is not the least Reason from Scripture, for any to imagine that an Elders Sin should be more favourably dealt with than

TIT. I. 5.
ACT. 20. 17.
Gal. 2. 11,
14.

than a private Members, or that there is a different Rule for judging of them; but that the Precepts of Christ for purging out the Leaven of Unrighteousness, are to all alike; for as the Lord respecteth no Mans Person, no not for Office-sake: So he hath commanded us, saying, Ye shall not respect Persons in Judgment.

Eph. 6. 9.
Col. 3. 25.
Lev. 10. 1,
2.
Deut. 1. 17.

V. *Objeckt.* We ought not to leave a Church, till Christ be departed from it.

Answer 1. If this be true, then no Baptized Congregation should receive a Member from our Brethrens Communion of the Independant Churches: For who can say that Christ hath left them, so as not to succeed their Ministry with true Conversion of Souls, and so as not to give something of his gracious presence to them and others, that are found in the fundamental Principles to Salvation; who truly fear the Lord and sincerely obey him according to their Light, tho' the Mist of Mens Traditions may not be clearly wiped from off their Eyes. I think none can be so uncharitable and censorious as to affirm it: But yet we may safely say, the more we come up in our Obedience to the perfect Rule of Christ, the greater our Peace and Comfort shall be, and the more of the presence of God, we shall enjoy in the gracious discoveries of his Eternal Love unto our Souls.

2. If Christ hath not left our aforesaid Brethren (and others that are not of our Communion) without some gracious Manifestations

nifestations of his Presence among them. And if therefore, according to the Objection, their Members ought not to leave their Churches, do not then those *Baptists* which plead this Argument for a mixed Communion among themselves, and yet receive the Members of those Independant Churches, condemn themselves thereby; as Countenancers, Abettors and Receivers of disorderly Persons, and as such, who according to this Objection, have little or nothing more to say for their Separation, and keeping up a distinct Church-state from them, then for a private and worldly Interest. And therefore away with such Pretensions for they are but a shame to us.

3. If we ought not to leave a Church, till Christ is departed from it, it must be meant, either of a partial or total departure: If it be understood of Christ's Partial departing from a Church, we must either allow it lawful for a Member to leave his present Communion, when Christ hath in part forsaken that Church, so as for their Declension of Spirit they are suffered to fall into such corrupt Mapners, erroneous Doctrine, false Worship, or irregular Practices, which the Lord hath commanded to be purged out from among them; or else that the Church it self has Power to prescribe Limits of Communion, according as she shall judge, (without regard to the written Precepts of Christ) that his presence doth bound it. But as I believe, no Baptized Churches will
C open

open their Mouths in favour of such an absolute Authority within themselves, for that we own the Scriptures to be our Rule; so it cannot be denied, but that it is lawful for Members to remove their Communion to a Church which is more Pure, for the same causes; as a Church should withdraw their Communion from a single Member, if for any cause at all. But if they mean, that we should not separate from a Church, till Christ is wholly departed from it; then it may be also argued, that a Church should not withdraw their Communion from a Member, till Christ be wholly departed from him. Besides, if a single Member should not depart from a Church, till Christ be wholly departed from it, then the Question is, Whether Christ may be said totally to depart from a Church, till at least it is manifest, that she is absolutely apostatized in her Spirit from some one Article of our Christian Faith, which is essential to Salvation; and if till then it be unlawful for single Persons to separate their Communion from a Church of Christ, than if their Church worshipping God in a false manner, so it be not in fundamentals of Salvation, and maketh void a Commandment of God through Mens Traditions, and are corrupted in their Morals, they must still hold their Communion with such a People; and it's hard to tell how far a Church may be guilty of these Evils, and not loose the Essentials to Salvation. But
if

if such a corrupt Communion ought to be held, rather than a Persons Separation from it should be allowed lawful, the consequents of it naturally tends to the overthrow and Extirpation of our Baptized Churches; for then what Obligation of Conscience is there for Baptized Believers to set up by themselves such a Church-state, which is despised and rendred obnoxious to many Christians, and which is accompanied with divers discouragements and outward disadvantages more than others. Besides, unless it be lawful for a Member, or the smaller number of a Church, to separate from their corrupt Communion, many Christians cannot reform nor worship God with the Church, or in the Administration of all Gospel-Ordinances, according to their Consciences; for generally Reformers are the fewest number, and if these should continue in their irregular Communion, their Light will be hid and smothered in the croud of corrupt Professors, and rather put under a Bushel than on a Gospel Candlestick, to shine more clearly to those that are round about them. Mat. 5. 14, 15, 16.

VI. Object. We are (say some Persons) for Charity and Union, and therefore we are for Communion at the Lord's Table with Christians, as such: If we believe them to be but real Christians, we ought to hold our Communion with them.

Answer 1. To our Brethren of the Congregational or Independant Churches of
C 2 whom

whom some have argued with me after the Nature of this Objection, as if we were too strait in our Charity, for not holding Communion with them. To whom I have this to say: 1. That I think we may fairly gather from what they have published (with their Confession of Faith) of the Institution and Order of Churches, that they do not admit any unbaptized Christians to their Communion at the Lord's Table, for in Article the seventh, speaking of a particular Church gathered and compleated according to the Mind of Christ. In Article the eighth, they say, "The Members of those Churches are Saints by Calling, visibly manifesting and evidencing — their Obedience unto that call of Christ, who being further known to each other by their Confession of the Faith, wrought in them by the Power of God — do willingly Consent to walk together, according to the appointment of Christ, giving up themselves to the Lord, and to one another, by the Will of God, in professed Subjection to the Ordinances of the Gospel. So then, if the Members of a compleat Church do willingly consent to walk together in professed Subjection to the Ordinances of the Gospel, none that do not subject themselves to the Ordinance of Baptism in their Sence can be orderly admitted by them, as compleatly qualified to their full Communion; and so if they will not hold Communion with such unbaptized Persons, they do not

not hold it, as some of them pretend, with Christians meerly as such ; but only with such Christians, which are qualified with Water-Baptism to receive the Lords Supper.

But 2. If they own, that our baptizing Persons on Confession of Faith, by way of dipping, is also right Baptism according to Gospel-Rule : and so for this Reason, they can freely hold their Communion with us. Yet this is no Corrector, that their Charity is more universal then ours, because then they receive us not meerly on the account of their Charity, but as Christians fitly qualified with Water-Baptism. But the Case is different, respecting us, for seeing we deny their Infant-sprinkling to be true Baptism, or to be of God ; and so they being to us as unbaptized Persons ; our having full Communion with them, would be not only contrary to the Light of our own Consciences, but witnessed against by their practice of sprinkling for Baptism, as a qualification to full Communion. And therefore, we have equal Reason to say, that our refusing Church-Communion with them, is not for want of Charity towards them as Christians, any more then it is for want of it in themselves to other Christians, that are not sprinkled or any ways baptized ; if they refuse Communion with them, as some have done in their private Conference, according to what is gathered as their Mind in Print before. So that I see no Reason,

C. 3

why

why our Brethren should in the least be offended at us, for keeping our selves from their Communion, when otherwise, so far as I can perceive, their Practice, as well as our own Consciences would condemn us for so doing.

*See their
28 Article
of the Insti-
tution of
Churches at
the end of
the Congre-
gational
Confession of
Faith.*

3. Our aforesaid Brethren of the Independent Churches (however some of their Members have in their private Converse reflected on us) have fairly granted, that a Person where he cannot continue in any Church without his Sin, may depart from the Communion of one Church to another. For they say, " Persons that are joined in Church-fellowship, ought not lightly or without just cause to withdraw themselves from the Communion of the Church whereunto they are so joined: Nevertheless, where any Person cannot continue in any Church without his Sin, either for want of the Administration of any Ordinances instituted by Christ, or by his being deprived of his due Privileges, or compelled to any thing in Practice not warranted by the Word, or in case of Persecution, or upon the account of Conveniency of Habitation, he consulting with the Church, or the Officer, or Officers thereof, may peaceably depart from the Communion of the Church wherewith he hath so walked, to join himself with some other Church, where he may enjoy the Ordinances in the Purity of the same, for his Edification and Consolation.

Now

Now seeing they grant, that we may leave our Communion with a Church, to join our selves with some other Church, where we may enjoy the Ordinances in the Purity of the same; then none of them ought to blame us, for not holding our full Communion with them; as if they were the standard of Truth, who we believe are not in the compleat Order and true Administration of all Gospel Ordinances. Seeing we walk by their Rule of Communion according to our Consciences, tho' we have not the same Light to walk with them.

2. For any of our Baptized Brethren to plead for mixed Communion, from the Obligation of universal Charity, for Christians as they are such, does rather betray their want of real Love; for that is a Fruit of the Holy Spirit, flowing first from the Faith we have in the Love of God to us; which is the cause of Love in us to him, and so to our Brethren which are begotten of him; and then our universal Love to Christians depending on our Love to God, it must consist with sincere Obedience to his Will, so far as we are inlightned. For this is the Love of God, that we keep his Commandments; and his Commandments are not grievous. And by this we know that we Love the Children of God, when we Love God and keep his Commandments. And therefore, whatsoever Love is pretended, which is inconsistent with sincere Obedience to Christ, 'tis rather to be suspected than counted real. But in Charity I

must conclude, it is not for want of Love to the Institutions of Christ, but for want of Light that you plead for Communion at the Lords Table with unbaptized Christians. However you do thereby virtually deny your own Baptism to be essentially necessary to a regular Gospel-Church, and make void that Holy Ordinance of Christ, which in Obedience to him you have subjected to. Besides, why may you not then also say, that you ought in Charity to Christians, meerly as such, (altho' they be not yet baptized,) to call any gifted Christian to administer the Ordinances of Preaching, Prayer, and breaking Bread in the Church, and in Charity to those Members that walk disorderly, and break the Commandments of Christ, forbear the Execution of his Ordinance of withdrawing your Church-Communion from them, because you believe them still to be real Christians; as if we could not Love Mens Persons, unless we favour their Sins, and thereby perhaps through the neglect of our Duty to them, harden their Hearts therein: And so under the Notion of Christian Charity, the true Order of a Gospel-Church may be quite destroyed.

VII. *Object.* But some may think, I open the door of the Church too wide, and give too great encouragement for Persons to wander from Church to Church, or to leave their present Communion to embody themselves into a distinct Church-state.

Answer 1. The same causes as will justify

if a single Persons removing his Communion to another Church, will also justify a Parties Separation to sit down by themselves in a Church-state; otherwise there is no erecting of Reformed Churches to be allowed, where there was none before: Which if it be there lawful to reform, as surely it cannot be denied, there is neither Scripture nor Reason, as I can find, to debar a reforming party from settling themselves in the Order of a Regular Gospel-Church, where there is one already, if they find it expedient for them.

But 2. To prevent such misapprehensions of giving Church-members too great a Liberty. I shall here remind the Reader, that if he duely considers, what I have said in this small Discourse, he will not find the least allowance for Persons to remove their Communion out of Novelty, or meerly for their Pleasures-sake, or for Trivial Matters and Pretences; for herein the Church is bound (in faithfulness to Christ, and the Souls that are under her special care) to use the means directed to in the Scripture, for preserving her mutual Peace and Welfare. But for real Conscience-sake, Separation should be allowed to keep themselves pure from corrupt and sinful Manners, Erroneous Doctrines in essentials to Salvation, and from false Worship and irregular Ordinances; and unless there be a Moral Necessity, or a real Expediency for it, no Separation else is lawful; for every Member is (or should be)

be) in Covenant with the Church, to walk in the ways of the Lord together with them. But yet when a Church of Christ shall alter in any part of their Faith or Practice essential to a regular Church, the Members thereof are free from their former Covenant: Not simply, because the Church has broken the Conditions of it; (for that were to acknowledge her Members to be under an absolute tye, while she makes no Alteration of her Faith and Practice.) For as none of our Churches in Covenanting with their Members, by giving them the right hand of fellowship, does intend thereby absolutely to bind themselves from any future Alteration of their Faith or Practice, if in Conscience they should be otherwise informed; so the like Liberty is but equitable for the Members to have, and therefore, as there is the same Reason for it, so it ought to be equally taken for granted in their Covenanting with the Church, that each Member in Covenant hath an equal Reservation of Liberty of Conscience to the Church, and neither side ought to impose on each other, for that is a making themselves the perfect standard of Religion, like the Church of Rome.

1 Pet. 5. 1,
2, 3.

3. The Apostle *Peter* exhorteth the Elders to take the oversight of the Flock, *Not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy Lucre, but of a ready Mind. [Neither as being Lords over Gods Heritage, but being examples to the Flock.]* And *Paul* saith, *That*

to spare you, I came not as yet unto Corinth. Not for that we have Dominion over your Faith, but are helpers of your Joy. And Timothy was commanded as a single Person, to withdraw himself from those Professors of Religion, that were corrupt in Doctrine.

2 Cor. 1.
23, 24.
1 Tim. 6.
2, 5.
2 Tim. 2.
22.
Chap. 3. 5.

Now if the Apostles, who were the infallible Pen-men of Sacred Scripture, disclaimed Lordship over the Saints, and Dominion over their Faith, Why should any hold such Principles, as will naturally assume such a regal Power over the Consciences of their Brethren, as tendeth to enthral them in divers troubles; when they go about to remove their Communion from them for Conscience-sake, considering also they themselves are but lately delivered from the Yoak of Persecution? And for such who make it their frequent Practice to receive Members, that remove for Conscience-sake from other Congregations (that are true Churches of Christ, as to their visible Matter, and part of their Form,) to hold such Principles as will deny their own Members Liberty of Conscience, without their Censures, Snares or Inthralments to frighten their weak Brethren to continue in their Communion against the Light which they have received, is consequently assuming such an Arbitrary Dominion over their Faith and Consciences which neither God nor Nature hath given to them, and is not Consonant to the Law, for doing to others as they would have others do to them in the like

like Case. And to speak the plain Truth of such a Principle and Practice, it is no better then claiming a right of Imposition on the Consciences of their Brethren, and a holding fast all they have, and all they can so get right or wrong.

And therefore seeing, the Light of Scripture and Reason with common Equity, is repugnant to such an Arbitrary Dominion over the Faith and Consciences of the Saints, and that this Principle of denying a single Member his Liberty of Communion according to his Light, is also a bar to Religious Reformation: I conceive none should go about to hinder a single Persons removing from them for Conscience-sake any other ways, than by Arguments from the Scriptures for the Regularity of their Communion; and if herein they cannot satisfie his Mind, I believe the Church should do no more, then (if they please) to enter him in their Book departed from them, for the cause for which he leaveth them, for as much as his Principles are not opposite to any of their Essentials of Communion. And in Case they were, yet if he holdeth no Error in fundamentals to Salvation, it better suits with the Grace of Love and universal Charity to one another, to let him peaceably remove his Communion, than by a harsh and sower Spirit, to widen the Differences that are between Saints and Saints, and to fright a weak and tender Conscience with the Censure of a Church; which if it be not
accor-

according to Christ's Institutions, it is neither bound in Heaven, nor should it be binding on our Consciences. But if a single Member should alter in his Faith or Practice, from any of his Church Essentials of Communion, and yet seek to continue in the same Church, then to prevent the spreading of his Leaven to the Pollution of the Body, or their being defiled with his Error by Participation in full Communion with him, they have ground on Non-repentance to withdraw from him; and if he persisteth in such an Error, to purge him out from their Communion. But to conclude the aforesaid Objection: What spiritual Comfort can any have in Church-Communion, where there is not an agreement in the Essentials thereof? doth not the sweetest Communion depend on the greatest Union in Faith and Practice? why then should any Christians be kept in Bondage, and be deprived of the chiefest ends of Church-Communion, which are to glorifie God in the purest worship they can attain to the Knowledge and Practice of, and to enjoy the comfortable Communion of Saints in the Unity of Faith and of the Spirit, which is the bond of Peace?

Secondly, I shall present you with a particular instance of the confused Matter which is already Printed among us, in Mr. *Keaches* Book, intituled the *Breach Repaired*; and of several Queries made upon it in my *Reply* to him, with some Additions to them. To
pro-

proceed therefore, I shall premise some particular things in Mr. *Keaches Gold Refined*, or *Treatise of Baptism*, Page 181, 182. where he saith thus, "Let me conclude all
 "with one Use of Caution to my Brethren,
 "that are Baptized as Believers, and yet
 "take Liberty to walk in Communion with
 "such Churches as dissent from them, in
 "respect of this Ordinance, and sprinkle
 "Babes. I am more concerned about you
 "than any other People, because you seem
 "to pull down with one Hand that which
 "you build with the other — ought you not
 "to follow the best and highest Reformation,
 "and clearest discovery of God, and
 "to be in the most perfect and compleat
 "Order of the Gospel; you are able to arrive
 "to the Knowledge of — is not Truth and
 "Righteousness to be joined with Peace and
 "Love? Nay, and doth not my Love run
 "out to our Brethren, in a cleaner Channel
 "than yours. And in his *Treatise of Laying on of Hands*, Page 99. he hath these Words. "Can we comfortably have Communion with such that oppose a Holy Oracle, or Command of God? — Ought
 "not Communion to flow from Christian
 "Union, especially in all fundamental Principles of Church-Constitution? Ought
 "we not in these things to be agreed, before we can in an orderly way sit down
 "together?

But notwithstanding Mr. *Benjamin Keach* thus refuseth Communion with those that
 are

are not under Believers-Baptism, and laying on of Hands, yet in his general Epistle to his (pretended) Answer to my Appendix, Page 9. he saith; "We do not say our dissatisfied Brethren shall sing with us, or we will have no fellowship with them: "No, God forbid we should impose on their Consciences: We do not look upon Singing, &c. an Essential of Communion; it is not for the being, but for the Comfort and well being of the Church. To which I there Reply to Mr. Keach, *Let me ask you in your own Words, Why should you have a greater esteem for one than for another Institution?* If it be as you say, that your way of Singing is a Gospel-Ordinance, for the Practice of the Church: Is there any Church Ordinance of Divine Worship, that is not essential to her orderly being, as well as for her Comfort and well Being? Who gave you Power to dispence with any one Ordinance more than others? And in Page 13. of my Epistle, I farther tell Mr. Keach, that there are divers things that I and others cannot reconcile to the Word of God, and his confused Principles of Communion, some of which I offer to his Consideration by way of Query.

1. Whether it be lawful for a Christian to withdraw (or remove) his Communion at the Lords Table, from a Church that practiseth any one Ordinance of Divine Worship, or of Church-Constitution, in a false Manner, to join with a Church that

See my Ep. to my Reply to Mr. Keach's Breach Re-paired, p. 10, &c.

See his darkness, &c. Vanquished or Truth in its Primitive Purity, p. 96.

is more pure ? And whether it is his Duty, if enlightned therein, so to do ?

2. Whether there is any Liberty given in the Word of God, for a Christian to have Communion with a Church that practiseth any one Ordinance of Gospel-Worship, or of Church-Constitution, in a false Manner, more than of any other such Ordinances so performed ? and if there be, which it is, or which they are, and where the allowance is given ?

3. Whether thanking and praising of God, be as much an Ordinance, and of as high a Nature, as Prayer to him ?

4. Whether [the Mode of Singing] the Praises of God, be also as much an Ordinance, and of as high a Nature, as Prayer ?

5. Why it is not as unlawful to have Communion with a Church that practiseth Singing the Praises of God in a false Manner, as with a Church that performeth Prayer in a false Manner ?

6. Seeing you have made a Common Praise-Book (so I call it) wherein yon say is contained some hundred of Sacred Hymns, out of which as I hear, is sometimes read and sang an Hymn in your Congregation for publick Worship: So if another Ministring Brother of your own or of another Congregation, in full Communion with you at the Lords Table, should also make prestinted set Forms of Prayer, and read them, or say them in the Church for publick Worship ; I Query, Whether you would nevertheless hold and
 conti-

continue your full Communion with such a Person or Church as so useth such humane prestinted Forms of Prayer?

7. Whether it be not a worshipping of God in a false Manner, and so unlawful, and a Sin for any of our Brethren alone by themselves, to pray in their own or anothers set humane prestinted form of Words, and if it can be proved against him, that he useth such private Prayers; Whether the Church should still hold their full Communion with him, without Repentance for it?

8. Whether it be not unlawful for any of our Churches to hold full Communion with a Brother at the Lords Table, who sometimes useth to pray with another different People, in a false Manner, in a set humane prestinted form of Words; and if this be unlawful, whether it is not equally unlawful for a Church to hold such Communion with a Brother, who tho' he cannot practice Singing the Praises of God in as false a Manner in his own Church, yet he sometimes as falsely singeth in other Congregations?

9. Whether [the Mode of Singing] an Hymn is a piece of Worship, Essential to the Regular and Compleat Administration of the Lords Supper? If our Singers deny this, why do so many of them make such a stir about it, and commend that practice of Singing, as they boldly say, from the Example of Christ and his Disciples, as a perfect Pattern and Rule for us to follow? And if they believe in their Consciences, that [the Mode

See the Reply to Mr. Steed's Epist. pag. 8. 40, 41, 45, 47, 49.

of Singing] an Hymn is so Essential to that Ordinance; How can any of those Gospel-Ministers, as I have heard say, administer the Lords Supper without it, and contrary to the Light of their own Consciences dispense with that which belongs, as they believe, to Christs Ordinance, as if they choose to please Men rather than God in his Worship?

I have added the more Queries, because such stating of the matter divers ways, will lay a greater Necessity on any who may pretend to answer them, either to discover the Discord and Confusion of their Principles of Communion, and the natural tendency of them, or to unmasque the farther designs of those that are apostatizing from the true Worship of God.

Thirdly, I shall here humbly present my Advice to some of our Baptized Churches. And

1. To those whose fixed Pastours and Ministers differ from their Churches in some Principles, Essential either to the true Manner of praising God in publick Worship, or to the Regular Constitution of a Gospel-Church, my humble Advice to you, is. That notwithstanding, if they rightly administer all Gospel-Ordinances, according to the Principles of their Churches, for the present necessity, you continue as you are: And as their Office is to watch over you in the Lord, so your Duty is to obey them so far as they rule by the Laws of Christ; and to continue your Affections, and abound in Love

Heb. 13.

17.

1 Thes. 5.

32.

Love to them and all the Saints. But yet if they put such different and erroneous Principles in practice, and thereby interrupt the pure Communion of their Churches, contrary to their Faith and settled Order, or go about to disturb your Peace with any of them; then as ye are bound to follow your Pastours and Ministers, only so far as they are followers of Christ and his Apostles, so it is your Duty to use all Diligence to preserve the Peace and right Constitution of your Churches against their Innovations; and rather than to have your Communion corrupted by them, you are to part with them and all things else, tho' never so near and dear to you.

1 Cor. 11.

Phil. 3. 17.

2. To those Churches which are destitute of a settled Pastour: I shall offer this to your serious Consideration, That it is a weak Imagination to think that honest and sincere hearted Ministers, tho' naturally of a mild and peaceable Temper, will not labour to promote the practice of those things in their Churches, which they believe to be the Will of God, for if they are faithful Men they will do it in Obedience to Christs Commission; wherein they are required to teach all Nations whatsoever he hath commanded them. And therefore if you expect that such a Minister as you design to call to settle with you, will not for the sake of some in the Church who differ from him, declare and promote according to his Conscience, the practice of all things which God requires

Math. 28.

20.

quires, you have equal Reason to expect that for the sake of those Persons, he will not be faithful to his Principles; and then how can any think he will be faithful to his Church, or any thing else he takes in hand, any farther than it suits with his private interest; so that whatever Love, Peace and Union, a Church may propose to themselves, under the care of such a fixed Pastour as differs in his Principles from it, in any Essentials of a Regular Church. *viz.* Either in Doctrinals to Salvation, Practicals in Divine Worship, or in Administrations of Gospel-Ordinances, such a Church does only delude themselves with an Expectation of that which they lay a Foundation to destroy; for if such a Pastour be faithful to his Principles (it being irrational to conceive that a whole Church will be for altering their former Settlement of Communion) they will then find that his differing Principles will breed Division among them, and so destroy the bond of Peace and Love, which they promised to themselves from the peaceable Temper of such a Pastour: And instead thereof, those faithful Members that are still for their former Settlement, may fall into a Labyrinth of Troubles; and if they are the smaller part of the Church, the others will be apt to count them the disturbers of its Peace; and perhaps when it is too late to recover the Truth and Purity of Gospel-Worship and Communion that was once among them, they will mourn under

der their Troubles and Temptations, and for their weakness in choosing or accepting of such a Pastour, as thereby to betray the Trust committed to them by Jesus Christ, so far as to loose of those things he hath wrought among them, insomuch as respecting their publick Trust of the Gospel, as ^{2 John 8.} Members of a visible Church of Christ, they will come so short of holding fast that which they have received, that no Man ^{Rev. 3. 11.} take their Crown, as that they cannot give so good an account of their Stewardship, as that evil Servant did, who rendred again ^{Math. 25, 26.} what he had received of his Lord.

Therefore knowing the aptness of many People to follow others Examples, from their Affections to them, more than from the real Judgment and Understanding they have of their Principles; and considering the experience some have had of the restless endeavours of their Ministers, to leaven their Churches with those Principles wherein they differ from them; and the Obligation of Conscience they are under, according to their Light, to declare the whole Counsel of God to the People under their care; ^{Acts 20. 26, 27.} I conclude it highly concerns those Churches that have yet their choice to make for the Ministration of Gospel-Ordinances, to seek for such Persons as are one with them in the Unity of the Faith, and of the Knowledge of Gospel-Institutions. For whatsoever Affections you may have to any Person, yet above all things you ought to be faithful

Tit. i. 7,
9, &c.

ful to the Truth, as ye have received it in your Consciences, and not by any means to be led aside to betray the Purity of the Gospel committed to your Trust, so far as to put it into the Power of any Person to be continually working (perhaps while you and others are lulld asleep in the pretended Bed of Charity) the overthrow and confusion of any essential part of the Religion you profess. Besides, a Pastour should be qualified, according to the Word of God, which saith, *A Bishop must be blameless, as the Steward of God — holding fast the faithful Word, as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound Doctrine, both to exhort and to convince the gain-sayers.* For there are many unruly, and vain-talkers, and Deceivers, especially they of the Circumcision: *Whose Mouths must be stopped.* Now consider, that one great qualification of an Elder, is to be able to stop the Mouths of Gain-sayers. And therefore none who differ from their Church in any essential Principles of her Communion, are fit for the Office of an Elder in it, for such a one in the Matters of difference, is principled rather to gain-say the Church, than other Persons that oppose the Faith or Practice of it.

Moreover the Zeal of others, which are for the common way of Singing, should provoke us to promote the pure Interest of Christ among our Churches, for they have used diligence to improve the Benefit of the publick Fund, for Learning of such young Brethren

thence the Knowledge of the Tongues, the better to fit them for the Gospel-Ministry; who have sucked in that apostatizing Principle of Singing, and I have been told that some of them have gone to School to learn it by Art in and about *Bristol*, or the Western parts of this Land, and if I am not misinformed, there were eight in number for common set form singing, two of which were advanced by more private means, then the publick Fund; and Mr. *Keach* has pleaded so much for Art in Divine Worship, that if the Spirit of the Lord does not lift up a spiritual standard against it, we may fear the increase of Artificial Worship in our Churches; for he saith, "There is I must tell you, an Art in speaking; and no Man but has need to learn, and be instructed to speak as he ought — especially when he speaks about Divine Things. — Also there is an Art in preaching; and all young Men when they begin to take upon them that work, need Instruction how to handle a Doctrine. And (saith he) so I may say in Praying too. So that we see, how naturally the Art of singing, which he is there pleading for, does draw Men in to plead for an Art in Praying too. And as I have said in my Reply to him, is not this a forward step (for him or others that may (if the Lord of his Mercy does not prevent) hereafter build upon this Foundation,) to bring into use a prestinted Form of Prayer for Gospel-Worship; for if Nature

See his Book intitled, the Breach Repaired in Gods Worship, Page 183, 184.

See my Book, Page 18.

and Grace may and ought to be improved by Art, to express the Matter of our Prayers to God ; what Art can he mean, or can any others think is best for Prayer, than to use an Artificial Form of Words? I mention these things to shew the danger that we are in of losing the true spiritual Worship of God, by the apostatizing of some in our Profession to the Errour of prestinted Forms of Singing. And if we do not incourage such gracious Brethren, as may be found among us better principled (whether with or without the Knowldge of other Tongues) to improve their Gifts, which through the Blessing of God may be fit for the publick Service of our Churches, many of them are like to crumble away for want of Ministers suitable to their Principles ; and those others, which have been advanced to the Ministry by the publick Fund, will have the greater opportunity through the necessities of our Churches to infect our Profession with their Error of common set form Singing (and I fear with mixed Communion too, which seem like twins to go hand in hand together.) As for their [Mode] of of Singing, I have largely shewed, that which was never answered by any of them, and plainly proved in my Reply to Mr. *Benjamin Keaches* Book of Singing, Intituled *the Breach Repaired, &c.* That we have no Command nor Example, neither under the Law, nor under the Gospel for the Ministers, and all the People to sing with united

nited Voices together in the settled worship of God in his Church. And that his common way of Singing, is not that Mode of spiritual singing which was used in the Apostles time, nor is it the natural, but an Artificial Mode of Worship: And also that we have not the least ground to conclude, that Christ and his Disciples at or after the Lords Supper did sing the Hymn or Praise, which they gave to God, for those Texts, *Math. 26. 30. Mark 14. 26. and Acts 16. 25.* are not rightly translated in our last Bibles, which are witnessed against by many of our old English Bibles, and many learned Authors, as I have abundantly shewed in my aforesaid Reply to Mr. *Keach*. But to return. It is therefore high time for all that have any Love for the Truth and Purity of Gospel-worship, to awake out of sleep; for the necessities of many Churches call upon us earnestly to seek the Lord by Humiliations, Fastings and Prayers; that he would graciously raise up Ministers, not only sound in the Faith, but in all their Principles of Divine Worship, in the Spirit of Love and Meekness. And tho' we may find some of our Ministers, and other Brethren, that are for the new Modelling of our Churches with their formal Worship, and mixed Communion to decline this Work with us, by Reason their different Principles cannot join with our particular Requests relating thereunto; yet this should in no wise hinder our People from flocking together, and crying
servent-

Isa. 44. 3, to fervently to the Lord for the pourings forth
 6. of the Holy Spirit (according to his promise)
 Ch. 59. 21. to bear a lively Testimony against all un-
 Eph. 4. 11, righteousness and false worship, and to give
 12, 13. us Pastours according to his heart, which
 Isa. 59. 19, shall feed his People with Knowledge and
 20, 21. Understanding, even such as shall worship him
 Jer. 3. 15. in Spirit and Truth, without any mixture
 of humane Forms and meer Inventions of
 men. For if instead of sound Elders we
 should have only those for the publick ser-
 vice of God that are for a piece of false wor-
 ship and mixed communion, what else can
 be expected from new Converts and those
 who joyn themselves to our Churches, but
 that through Love and Affections to their
 Ministers they will suck in their Erroneous
 Principles, as sad Experience hath shewed,
 and so in time will overturn the former or-
 der and settlement of our Churches, and put
 back that blessed Reformation which God
 has wrought among us, and which many pre-
 cious Saints have suffered for, that the Puri-
 ty of the Gospel (which some are now betray-
 ing) might be handed down to future ages.

Fourthly, I shall leave a few things to the
 serious consideration of those who have re-
 ceived the manifestation of the special Grace
 of God in Christ to their souls, through faith
 which worketh by love, and yet are walk-
 ing at large in neglect of his holy Ordinan-
 ces, as if they were left to Christians liber-
 ty to obey or reject them at their pleasures.
 Let me ask a few Questions for thee to an-
 swer

fwer in thine own Conscience, which shall Rom. 2.
 either accuse or else excuse thee in the day 15, 16.
 when God shall judge the secrets of men
 by Jesus Christ, according to the Gospel.
 Why art thou partial in Gods laws or in Mal. 2.9.
 Christs institutions, so as to pick and choose
 which of them thou wilt obey? Remember,
David saith, Then shall I not be ashamed, when Psal. 119.
I have respect unto all thy Commandments. 6. Wilt
 thou partake of the Benefit of the publick
 Prayers of the Saints, and of the Ministration
 of the Gospel of Christ in his Church, and not
 put to thy helping hand to support it in the
 World, and to convey it down to future
 ages? what had become of thy precious soul,
 and many thousands more, if our late Re-
 formers had bin of thy Mind? how should
 the true worship of God have bin maintain-
 ed, and how little preaching should we have
 in our present day, if Christians did not im-
 body themselves into Societies to encourage
 the Gospel Ministers? for where can their
 light best appear if not on a Gospel Candle-
 stick? No marvel, Soul, if thou hast not
 peace of Conscience and strength of Grace
 against the power of Sins and Temptations, if
 thy feet are not found in the ways of Christ,
 whose ways are ways of pleasantness, and all Prov. 3. 17.
 his paths are peace and strength to the up- Ch. 10. 29.
 right. There God has said he meets his Isa. 64. 5.
 people that remember him in his ways, and
 Christ has much intailed his gracious pre-
 sence on the faithful obedience of his Saints.
He that hath my Commandments, and keepeth Joh. 14. 21.
them

them, he it is that loveth we: And he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest my self to him. — If a man love me, he will keep my words: And my Father will love him; and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. And therefore the more obedient a Soul is, the more of Christs fulness he shall receive, and Grace for Grace.

John 1. 16.

But 2. If thou standest off from Church-Communion, because thou thinkest thy self unworthy of it, or unmeet for it, or till thou hast a special inspiration to thrust thee forth in thy duty; my Answer is, that in this snare I was intangled my self for divers years, but at last I was satisfied in my Conscience; that seeing I had true saving Faith and Light in Gospel Ordinances, my personal unworthiness through the infirmity of Nature was no sufficient Ground for me to neglect the Institutions of Christ, and that I could not rationally expect any extraordinary motions to do that which the Word of God did plainly expresse to be my Duty. Besides, for Christians to wait for a more than ordinary impulse of Spirit, to thrust them forth in their Duty, when clearly exprest in the Holy Scriptures, is thro' weakness of Faith, a Tempting God to confirm his written Will by extraordinary Inspiration, which is a Sin, *Math. 4. 7.*

Moreover, I shall farther remove this objection from 1 Cor. 11. 27. *Whosoever shall eat this Bread, and drink this Cup of the Lord unworthily,*

worthily, shall be guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord. This unworthiness cannot respect our natural infirmities, for then the best of men would be excluded from that Ordinance; but the unworthiness there mentioned is described to us in the same Chapter to be, Divisions and Drunkeness, and such like Disorders as should not be suffered in a Gospel-Church, or that shew they despise the Church of God. And therefore Christians having light in Gospel Ordinances, tho' they are but weak in Faith and Babes in Christ, and have not yet attained to the Faith of Assurance of their Election, ^{2 Pet. 1. 10.} or to the clear witnessings of the Spirit of God with their Spirits, that they are the Children of God, yet having the true Faith of cleaving to Christ with full purpose of heart, and of reliance on his death and merits for Salvation and eternal life, those have a right to full Communion with the Church, at the Lords Table and we are bound to receive them, but not to doubtful Disputations: But. ^{Rom. 8. 16.}

If thou art one within the visible pale of the Church, and such a wonderful and horrible thing is therein, or shall happen, as was in *Israel*, tho' in a different manner, the Prophets prophesied falsely, and the Priests ^{Jere. 5. 31.} bear Rule by their means, and the people loved to have it so. As the Lord said to them, so will I say to thee, if then thou art of their Spirit, what wilt thou do in the end thereof, when the Lord shall visit for these

these things? canst thou bear, yea like and plead for an Alteration in thy Church-Constitution, or in Gods worship, because thy Pastour will have it so. Take heed lest thou givest ground to say of thee as it was
 Isa. 3. 12. said to Israel: *O my People, they which lead*
 Ch. 9. 16. *thee, cause thee to err, and destroy the way of thy paths. — and they that are led of them are destroyed.* Brethren, beware lest ye provoke, the Lord to Jealousy! are ye stronger than he? hath he not said, what things soever
 Deut. 12. I command you, observe to do it? Thou
 32. shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it. And have we not divers instances of his sore Displeasure for breaking his Rule of Worship, as in *Nadab* and *Abihu*, who for offering of strange fire, died before the Lord? And might not some have thought it a small matter to have eaten of the Peace or Thank-offering after the first day, or of the Vow-offering, if any of it had been left on the third day, but we see how great an offence it was to make so small an Addition to Gods Ordinance, as that it should not be accepted, neither should it be imputed to him that offered it: It should be an Abomination, and that soul should bear his iniquity. Moreover, we read how the Lord smote above fifty thousand of the men of *Beher-shameish* for but looking into his Ark, and how
 2 Sam. 6. 6. *Uzziah* lost his life for touching the Ark of
 1 Sam. 6. God, because they sought him not after the
 19. due manner: And how *Uzziah* the King for
 2 Chr. 26. meddling with Gods Ordinance, and burning
 16. incense

incense before the Lord, contrary to his revealed Will, was smote with leprosy unto his dying Day. And Christ tells us, that in vain they do worship him teaching for Doctrines the Commandments of Men. Therefore to the Law and to the Testimony: If they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them, and let us keep the Commandments of God and worship him in Spirit and in Truth, for Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the Life that now is, and of that which is to come.

1 Chr. 15.

13.

Mat. 15 9.

Isa. 8. 20.

Joh. 4. 24.

1 Tim. 4 8.

Postscript.

After I had penned the preceeding Treatise, meeting with some other Motives, I thought it necessary to add a brief Discourse on two particular Cases: The First to shew, that it is the Duty of Gospel-Ministers and all true Believers, in Order to Church-Communion, to subject themselves to the Ordinance of Water-Baptism. The Second is against Excess in Apparel. And First, I shall premise some few things that are worth our Observation which I find in Mr. William Kiffin's Book, Intituled *A Sober Discourse of Right to Church-Communion*: Where in his Epistle he saith, "The sence I have of my own weakness and inability, would have been a Bar to me to appear in this publick way, did I not

"see

" see a necessity lying upon me for the
 " Truths sake, and the sakes of many, by
 " reason of some that have lately risen up to
 " weaken, if not make void that great Ordinance of Baptism, by endeavouring to
 " maintain, that all Persons that believe,
 " altho' they never did, nor do practice the
 " same, may partake of the Ordinance of
 " the Lords Supper, and all other Gospel
 " instituted Duties: A Notion, not only
 " contrary to the primitive Pattern, but the
 " constant Practice of all that ever professed
 " the Christian Religion, or that own the
 " Scriptures to be the Rule of Faith and Practice. And speaking somewhat of the
 " like nature in p. 3. he also saith, " We shall
 " therefore direct this Discourse to our dissenting Brethren, of the baptized way only. And in page 13, 14. he argueth, saying, " If unbaptized Persons may be admitted to all Church Priviledges, does not
 " such a Practice plainly suppose that it is
 " unnecessary? — The Baptists (if once
 " such a Belief prevails) would be easily
 " tempted to lay aside that reproachful Practice. — And challenge their Church-Communion by Vertue of their Faith only;
 " and such as baptize Infants would be satisfied to discontinue the Practice, when
 " once they are perswaded, that their
 " Children may be regular Church-members
 " without it; — and by consequence be in
 " a likely condition to loose one of the Sacraments, which would easily make way
 " for

for the loss of the other, both having an equal sanction in Scripture; and the Arguments that disanul the one, will destroy the other, and consequently all Ordinances, and Modes of Worship, and lastly, Religion it self. And in page 118. In answer to an Objection, he saith, " This Objection suppoies things very dangerous. As, that holiness without Baptism invests a right to other Church-Ordinances, which is not to be supposed, for Christ the Lamb of God was holy in the highest degree, and in him was found no sin; yet he was baptized before he entred upon his publick Ministry, which is a most illustrious Example, and the Pattern which the Saints followed; for in a word, the great Apostle Paul and all those primitive Saints recorded by the Spirit to be Believers, and therefore holy; were nevertheless Baptized, which might have been forborn, but that it was an indispensable Duty.

And Secondly, It seemeth strange to me, that any professing Obedience to Gospel-Ordinances should so far countenance others in the neglect of a positive Institution of Christ, as to plead for Church-Communion with Christians, without Baptism, when our Lord hath plainly commanded his Apostles and Ministers to the end of the World saying, *Go ye therefore and teach all Nations, Math. 28; Baptizing them, — teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: And lo, I am with you alway even unto the end of the*

Acts 2. 38,
41.

Acts 15.
22, 28.

World. For seeing the Disciples of Christ were commanded to Baptize as well as to Preach, and to teach others successively to do the same; It is undeniably clear, if Scripture and Reason may take Place, that the Gospel Ministers ought to Baptize those that obey their Doctrine; as Peter said, *Repent, and be baptized every one of you — then they that gladly received his Word, were Baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand Souls. And they continued stedfastly in the Apostles Doctrine and Fellowship, and in breaking of Bread, and in Prayer.* Here we find those new Converts were commanded every of one them to be Baptized, and this way they were added to the Primitive Church of Christ at Jerusalem; which was the Pattern for all Gospel-Churches to follow in after Ages. For there were the twelve Apostles, who were endowed with the extraordinary Gifts of the Holy Spirit, to shew us the perfect pattern of Gods House: And this was the Church that said, *It seemeth good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater Burthen then these necessary things; and from this Pattern (given as it were in the Mount of God) we find Baptism was commanded as the entring Ordinance into Church Communion, or upon Confession of Faith before it; for baptized Believers (tho' the true visible matter of a Gospel-Church) were not always immediately formed into a Gospel-Church Order, for this was sometimes a work of time,*

As we have an Instance, how *Paul* baptized the twelve Disciples at *Ephesus*, and went into the Synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three Months, before he separated the Disciples from the Multitude.

Acts 19. 1;
to 10.

Moreover, we have several other Precepts and Examples, that do confirm the Ordinance of Baptism, immediately to follow Conversion and Faith in Christ: As when *Philip* Preached unto the Eunuch, and he believed, he was immediately Baptized.

Acts 8. 35;
to 39.

And when *Cornelius* and his Friends were Converted, *Peter* commanded them to be Baptized: And so we find *Lydia* and her Household, and the Jaylor and his Household were Baptized, immediately after their Conversion.

Acts 10. 44,
48.
Acts 16. 14,
15, 32, 33.
Ch. 18. 8.

And all these instances plainly shew, that Water-Baptism was administered to Converted Believers, before they were in Church-Order to receive the Ordinance of the Lords Supper; and 'tis called a putting on Christ, viz. by a visible Profession; and signifieth our dying unto Sin, and living in newness of Life unto God: As also our being born of the Spirit; and all these denote Baptism to be the first visible Sign of a Believer in Christ, and it is appointed to accompany the Preaching of the Gospel, as a Christian Badge on all that shall believe.

Gal. 3. 27.
Col. 2. 12.
Rom. 6. 3,
to 7.
Joh. 3. 3, 5.
Mark 16.
15, 16.

And it was called a Foundation-Principle, viz. of a visible Church-state, the matter whereof was, and still should be baptized Believers. And there being not the least instance in the New Testament, of any one

Acts 2. 38,
41.
Ch. 8. 12.
Ch. 18. 8.

Person that was ever added to a Gospel-Church without Water-Baptism, nor that any Gospel-Church was ever gathered, but of baptized Believers; to exclude it as no entering Ordinance into Church-Communion, against so many clear Commands and Examples on Sacred Record; which shews it is immediately to follow believing in Christ, will lay a Foundation to deny all Gospel-Ordinances, and the Holy Scriptures themselves to be of use to us, to discover the Truth of Gospel-Worship and Obedience.

I. Object. Is from *Rom. 14. 1.* *Him that is weak in the Faith receive you.*

Answer, To this Scripture Mr. *Will. Kiffin* in his aforesaid *Sober Discourse*, saith,
 “The weakness spoken of in the Text,
 “hath Relation only to those Mistakes
 “that did attend some of them, touching a
 “Liberty of eating, or not eating of Meats,
 “or the keeping or not keeping of Days,
 “which were things in themselves of an in-
 “different Nature, the doing or not doing
 “of which was not Sin, as the Apostle in
 “that Chapter plainly shews; and hath no
 “Relation to the Order of Worship prescri-
 “bed by Christ, much less to the Practice,
 “or not Practice of Ordinances, for then
 “the meaning of the Apostle should be, if they
 “did Practice, or not Practice, it was all
 “one, there was no Sin in the Matter. —
 “But to bring this Text, to prove a law-
 “fulness of receiving any that are Christi-
 “ans,

"ans, altho' never so ignorant of the Ordinances, and instituted Worship of Christ, and the Order prescribed by him, is to wring Blood out of it, and not that precious Truth that is manifested by it.

II. *Object.* Is from 1 Cor. 12. 13. *For by one Spirit are we all Baptized into one Body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be Bond or Free, and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.* Here is (say some) a Baptism mentioned, by which they are brought, or initiated into this Body, viz. the Church; Ver. 28. but say they, it is the Baptism of the Spirit, and not of Water.

Answer, That which is called the Baptism of the Holy Ghost, were those extraordinary Gifts of the Holy Spirit which Christ had promised his Disciples they should receive not many days hence, and was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost, and given to others afterwards. And we no where find the common Gifts and Graces of the Holy Spirit, called Baptism: And therefore this Baptism in the Text (having some Relation to these excellent Gifts, as appears in the preceeding Verses) it must be understood either only of those extraordinary Gifts of the Spirit in the Ministry, whereby the Primitive Gospel Ministers were qualified, to break down the middle Wall of Partition, and unite all, both Jews and Gentiles, Bond and Free, that were Effectually called, into one Body or visible Church-state; or rather thus, that the Apostle speaks of the Gentiles

Acts 1. 5.
Ch. 2. 12

Acts 10.
44, 45, 46

E 3

with

with himself, and other Jews, that through the extraordinary Ministration of the Spirit were baptized with Water-Baptism into one Body. For seeing it cannot rationally be supposed, that those of the Church of Corinth to whom the Apostle could not speak

1 Cor. 3. 1, *as unto Spiritual, but as unto Carnal, even as*
2. *unto Babes in Christ*: Or that every individual Believer included in the Text, was Baptized [with] the Spirit, but as its said [by] the Spirit, as the efficient cause. It then follows, that the Baptism in the Text, must be taken for Water-Baptism; considering also, that those Brethren the Apostle

1 Cor. 12. 1. wrote unto with himself and other Jews, are said in the Text in Distinction to Baptism, to have been all made to drink into one Spirit; which Expression is far short of being all personally baptized with the Baptism of the Spirit; and therefore to me it clearly appears, that the Baptism spoken of in the

Objection, must be taken for Water Baptism as its said, that when the *Corinthians* had the Gospel preached to them, many of them hearing believed and were Baptized, viz. not many of the Church then already formed into an orderly Church-state, but many of the People of that City Believed and were Baptized, and so the Apostle laid the Foundation of the Church of Corinth, and planted the same, which *Apollo* watered.

Ver. 10.

1 Cor. 3. 6.

10.

Ch. 1. 12.

III. *Object.* The Apostle Paul saith, That Christ sent him not to Baptize, but to preach the Gospel, 1 Cor. 1. 17.

Answer,

Answer, The Apostle *Paul* was Baptized himself, and he tells us, that there is one Eph. 4. 4, Body, one Spirit, one Lord, one Faith, one 5. Baptism, viz. one Water-Baptism, because it is here distinguished from the Spirit, as pertaining to the Body, or dwelling in its Gifts and Graces in the Church. And he also instructed the twelve Disciples at *Ephesus* to be Baptized, tho' they were Baptized 4. before with *Johns* Baptism. And he Baptized *Crispus* and *Gaius*, and the Household of *Stephanus*, so that if he were not sent to Baptize, he acted beyond his particular Commission, and had not so much Authority as other Gospel Ministers received from the general Commission given to them; and therefore the Apostles meaning is, That tho' his Commission to Preach and Baptize was as large as others, yet his work was not so much actually to Baptize and spend his time in that Service, as to preach the Gospel, he being extraordinarily Gifted thereunto; for he was counted the chief Speaker, and those 12. Ministers that were his Companions being qualified to Baptize, were doubtless helpful to him in that Service; for when he preached to the *Corinthians*, it is said (not only *Crispus*, and all his House believed, but) many of the *Corinthians* believed and were baptized. So that *Pauls* Expression, that he was not sent to Baptize, is to be expounded as its said of Christ, that tho' he made and 1. baptized more Disciples than *John*, yet Jesus himself baptized not, but his Disciples,

70 *Objections Answered against no Church*

Acts 2. 41.

and as when *Peter* had preached there were other Gospel Ministers with him, who did Baptize, otherwise *Peter* himself could not have baptized in one day about three thousand Souls. And so we find, that *Paul* had *Silas* and *Timotheus* with him at *Corinth*, when so many of them were Baptized, and that as a Son with the Father, so had *Timothy* served with him in the Gospel. And therefore the Text being fairly and most properly thus expounded, the aforesaid Objection is invalid, and cannot prove an Admission to Church Communion, without the Ordinance of Water-Baptism.

IV. *Object.* Gal. 3. 27. *As many of you as have been Baptized into Christ, have put on Christ*: From whence it hath been said that some of the Members of those Churches, were not Baptized.

Answer, To explain the Mind of the Holy Ghost, I shall here recite the preceeding Words, *Ver. 26. For ye are all the Children of God by Faith in Christ Jesus*; and then it follows, *Ver. 27. For as many of you as have been Baptized into Christ, have put on Christ*, From whence I observe, that the Word [all] *ver. 26.* is in *ver. 28.* put for the same Persons to shew there is no Distinctions of Acceptance of Persons, in Christ Jesus, whether *Jews* or *Greeks*, Bond or Free, Male or Female, all are one, and by Faith in Christ are alike, the adopted Children of God, and so the Word [all] must be understood in *ver. 26.* as having

ing Relation to *ver.* 28. and not of every individual Member of those Churches of *Galatia*, for who can think they were all, *viz.* every individual Person of them really the Children of God, seeing they were so far Apostatized, as that the Apostle said he was afraid of them, least he had bestowed on them labour in vain. And then, if the Word *Ch. 4. 11.* [all] must be restrained to all those only, or to so many as were the Children of God by true Faith in Christ, it is put for no more than the Word [many] *viz.* for so many or all of them, as had received both the inward Grace, as well as the outward putting on the visible Profession of it by Water-Baptism. And the like instance we have that the Word [all] is restrained [to many] *Rom. 5. 18.* compared with *ver. 19.* And therefore the aforesaid Scripture can be no Proof that any Persons were admitted into Church-Communion without Water-Baptism.

And farther to clear this Objection, from *Rom. 6. 3.* There is this to say, that that Epistle was written to all that were in *Rome*, beloved of God, called to be Saints, which comprehendeth a Direction of that Epistle, not only to one or more particular Church. *Rom. 16. 5,* *es in the Order of the Gospel, but to all the 14, 15.* Saints in *Rome*, beloved and called of God, whether within, or for want of time and growth of Grace and Knowledge, were then waiting on the Ministry of the Gospel for farther Light, without the Pale of the Visible

ble Church; and therefore the Apostle might properly say, that so many of us, viz. of all those Saints in general, as were gathered into a Church-state, and baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his Death, viz. into the likeness of his Death by Water-baptism; and thus the Word [many] may be taken in its most proper Sense, without the least implication that unbaptized Christians were admitted to full Communion with the Church at the Lords Table.

V. *Object.* The Church in the Wilderness received Members the way which was not prescribed, but directly against the revealed Mind of God, yet stood a true Church and their Members true Members. For this Church had Circumcision for their entering Ordinance, and the uncircumcised were utterly forbidden to eat the Passover, yet this Church received Members without and otherwise than by this entering Ordinance, they also admitted them to the Passover so long as forty Years without it.

Answer, It is expressly said, That all the People (viz. the Males) that came out (of Egypt) were Circumcised, but all the People that were born in the Wilderness by the way, as they came forth out of Egypt, them they had not circumcised. — because they had not circumcised them by the way. From whence I observe, that seeing the Children of Israel were not Circumcised by the way, and yet that all were Circumcised that came out of Egypt,

Gen. 17.
13, 14.
Exo. 12.

Josh. 5. 4,
to 8.
Exod. 14.
10, 11, 12.

Egypt, it must needs follow, that they were Circumcised in *Egypt*, as the Lord commanded *Moses*, *Exod.* 12. 48, to 52. which tho' it is there rehearsed, after the account of the Destruction of the first-born of *Egypt*, &c. yet Circumcision was commanded before, as appeareth by the two last verses of that Chapter. And so it was from its first Institution to *Abraham*, again renewed by *Moses*, as an entring Ordinance into a Visible Church-state, and the Priviledges thereof; but the occasion of the disuse of this Ordinance afterwards in the Wilderness, not being expressed as I can find in any part of the Scriptures, we must conclude, that as God never approved of the Wilful neglect of the least of his Commandments, and seeing he again commanded *Israel* to be Circumcised, when they were entring in to possess the promised Land of *Canaan*, we have not the least encouragement from *Israel's* Example of Disobedience in the Wilderness (which is so much in general, as well as in some particulars complained of in the Holy Scriptures) nor from Gods renewing his Command to *Israel* for Circumcision, to Countenance the neglect of any Gospel Ordinance, but contrariwise in Case of any Declension among Believers, to stir up one another to a Reformation, according to the Institutions of Christ, and the Primitive Pattern of Gods spiritual House on Sacred Record.

VI. *Object.* It is farther said, that *Aaron* let

Lev. 10. let the offering for Sin be burnt, that should
Ch. 6. 26. have indeed been eaten; yet because he could not do it to his Edification, *Moses* was Content.

Answer, *Moses* was content not simply, because *Aaron* had done contrary to the Commandment, but because *Aaron* had such things befallen him that day, as that it would not have been accepted of God for him to eat the Offering, as we find by *Aarons* Answer to *Moses*, *Lev. 10. 19.* And this being on the extraordinary occasion of *Aarons* losing his two Sons, *Nadab* and *Abihu*, who died before the Lord for Offering of strange Fire; it is most likely, either this Sin of his House, or thereby was occasioned some unholiness, or some other uncleanness happened to *Aaron* (tho' it is not particularly expressed) as did by Law prevent him from eating of the Holy Sacrifice, *Lev. 6. 18, 27.* And so it is under the Administration of the Gospel, that in case of Sin, or any Uncleanness, prohibited the Communion of the Church by the Laws of Christ, the Offender (until there be Repentance to take it off) ought not to partake of the Holy Supper, tho' it be commanded as a Gospel-Ordinance; yea, a whole Church may suspend it for a season, rather than to partake of it with such evils as are prohibited their Communion by the Laws of Christ; and who will say, that such a Suspension of the Ordinance will be charged as her Sin, if she be necessitated thereunto, for want of a Person

son or Ministring Brother gifted and qualified for that Service. And therefore from what hath been here said, we may conclude, that the aforesaid Old Testament Cases have no Example in them; as shadows to justify any Believers admittance into Church-Communion without Water-Baptism; but that those and all other Scriptures must be expounded, so as to preserve the Concord of Sacred Writ with the plain and positive Institutions of Christ and his Apostles, and their Examples with the Primitive Churches, who clearly witness to the Ordinance of Water-Baptism preceeding Church-Communion.

Against Excess in Apparel.

THat Ornaments of Apparel in a Scripture Sence may be allowed, so far as they suit and rather tend to the Credit and Reputation of the Gospel, and that a difference in Apparel is not unlawful, according to the State and Circumstances of the Saints, is not denied. But yet whatever Ornaments are inconsistent with Modesty, Gravity and Sobriety, and are a scandal to Religion, ought to be cast off, as being a defilement to Believers, and an Abomination in the sight of God, who reprov'd and brought his Scourge upon the Daughters of Zion, for
Isa. 3. 16.
Zeph. 1. 8.
the

- the Bravery, Haughtiness and Pride of their Attire, and by the Prophet hath said, he would punish all such as were cloathed with strange Apparel. And the Apostle saith,
- 1 Tim. 2. 8, 9. *I will therefore that — Women adorn themselves in modest Apparel, with Shame-facedness and Sobriety; not with Broidered Hair, or Gold, or Pearls, or costly Array; but (which becometh Women professing Godliness) with good works.*
- 1 Pet. 3. 3, 4, 5. *— And whose adorning, let it not be the outward adorning, of Plating the Hair, and of Wearing of Gold, or of putting on of Apparel; but the Ornament of a meek and quiet Spirit, which is in the sight of God of great Price: For after this manner in the old time, the Holy Women also who trusted in God adorned themselves.*
- 1 Cor. 11. 14. *— And doth not even Nature it self teach you, that if a Man have long Hair, it is a shame unto him. And we are not to be conformed to this World, but we are commanded to provide things honest in the sight of all Men; and as obedient Children, not fashioning your selves according to the former Lusts, in your Ignorance: But as he which hath called you is Holy, so be ye Holy in all Manner of Conversation; and to give none offence, neither to the Jews nor to the Gentiles, nor to the Church of God. But as the Apostle saith, whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report, if there be any Virtue, and if there be any Praise, think on these things. Now from these Scriptures, we may conclude, that tho' our present excessive fashions are not all expressly forbidden,*

den, yet if any kind of adornings are prohibited, and if those Texts were written for our Instruction, as I think none can doubt thereof, or be so bold to deny it, that have any Sence of true Religion; then surely they require all the Saints, both Men and Women, at least to abstain from all those excesses in Apparel which are not of good report among sober Men, and whoever putteth on such Attire or Ornaments of Apparel, as are not of good honest and modest report, they are guilty of breaking the Commandments of Christ, and so are to be dealt withal by the Church as disorderly Persons, who bring a scandal upon their Holy Profession.

Besides, it is not only a grief for sober Christians to see such Pride of Spirit appearing in their Communion, but its also a stumbling to others which are well inclined, to walk in the ways of the Lord with them, as I have found by my own experience: For when I was first awakened to seek the Lord, and the good of my Soul, the extravagant Dresses of some Professors among whom I heard the Gospel preached, occasioned me to think there was the less Religion in them, and that they looked not as if they were Christs People; and for this cause alone (I having then no Light in Gospel-Ordinances of Communion) I departed to another Church, which appeared more like sober Christians, and there I have continued about five and twenty years. And considering the Scrip-
ture

ture faith, the Lord hateth a proud look —
 Prov. 6. 16, And God resisteth the proud, but giveth
 17. Grace unto the Humble: And that the
 Jam. 4. 6. Commandments of Christ require our Con-
 & Pct. 5. 5. formity in all things suitable to his Name and
 Math. 23. Truth, and those Holy and Self-denying
 24. Principles we profess, how can such excesses
 Rom. 6. 4. in Apparel which even gives their Professi-
 on the Lie, consist with their sincere Obedi-
 Jam. 2. 18. ence to him? How do they shew their Ho-
 ly Faith therein by their Works, but rather
 as it is said of her that liveth in Pleasure,
 Gal. 6. 7. that she is dead while she liveth. *Be not de-
 ceived, God is not mocked, for whatsoever a
 Man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he
 that soweth to his Flesh, shall of the Flesh reap
 Corruption: but he that soweth to the Spirit,
 shall of the Spirit reap Life Everlasting.*

To conclude, our Baptized Churches that
 are for particular Election and final Perse-
 verance in the same Faith and Order of the
 Gospel in full Communion together; they
 (nor many others) have not any Reason to
 reflect on the true design of this Treatise, or
 on the Matters contained therein, as any
 ways tending to the Interruption of our
 Peace, on the settled Principles of our
 Churches, but to the purging out the leaven
 of unrighteousness, that may be found a-
 mong them; nor can any Person in our Com-
 munion appear against the plain Contents of
 this Treatise, but they must at the same time
 appear for and Countenance such sinful Man-
 ners, Erroneous Doctrine, false Worship,
 and

The Conclusion.

79

and corrupt Administration of Gospel Ordinances, as the Word of God, and the general Profession of our Churches does plainly witness against; and consequently they will apparently shew themselves opposers of Reformation, or such as labour to weaken and confound the Baptist Churches and our pure Religion. Yea farther, if corrupt Manners which is manifestly sinful by the Moral Law of God, or such Erroneous Doctrine, false Worship, or irregular Administrations of Gospel Ordinances as are prohibited our Communion by the Holy Scriptures, should be knowingly suffered therein, it is a visible Mark of Degeneration; and thereby the Church partakes of the Sins of particular Members, Lev. 19. 17. *Thou shalt not hate thy Brother in thine Heart, thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy Neighbour, and not suffer Sin upon him:* Or as it is in our Margin, *that thou have not Sin for him.* And Paul saith to Timothy, *Lay Hands suddenly on no Man, neither be partakers of other Mens Sins, keep thy self Pure.* Besides, it is shewed before, what warrant and command we have in the New Testament, for withdrawing our Communion in the aforesaid Cases of Sin, and from disorderly Persons: And therefore when a Church persisteth in a wilful neglect of this Duty, she brings herself under the guilt of Sin for breaking of Christs Commandment; but in Case this were faithfully performed, yet the

F

Church

3 Theſ. 3. Church ſhould ſtill endeavour, by due ad-
 14, 15. moniſhing of ſuch Offenders, to reduce
 Tit. 3. 10. them to their Obedience; and if no Re-
 Gal. 5. 12. pentance be found, ſhe ought to proceed
 1 Cor. 5. 4. to a farther Act of Authority, and cut
 5. them wholly off from her fellowſhip.
 1 Tim. 1.

20. But if any plead, that ſo ſtrict a Diſ-
 cipline, as hath been argued for in this
 Treatiſe, cannot be duely obſerved with-
 out indangering their Church-State: It
 deſerves our Noting, either as a Carnal
 Reflection on the Holy and Righteous
 Precepts of Chriſt, and on his Wiſdom,
 as not preſcribing ſuch Laws which con-
 duce moſt to the Glory of God, and
 the good of his People here on Earth; or
 it is a ſign that ſuch a Church has been
 ſo long in the neglect of their Duty to-
 wards Chriſt and one another; and are ſo
 far degenerated in their Spirits, as that
 they ſeem to be paſt recovery: And if
 this be the State of ſome, who perhaps
 may have as high a Conceit of themſelves
 as the Church of the Laodiceans had, and
 ſay, *I am Rich, and increaſed with Goods,*
and have need of nothing; and knoweſt not
that thou art wretched, and miſerable, and
poor, and blind, and naked; Chriſt coun-
 ſelleth ſuch to buy of him Gold tried in
 the Fire, *that thou mayeſt be rich, and white*
Raiment, that thou mayeſt be Cloathed, and
that the ſhame of thy Nakedneſſe, do not ap-
pear, and anoint thine Eyes with Eye-Salve,
that thou mayeſt ſee. And ſaith our Lord,

Rev. 3. 17,
 18, 19.

As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: Be zealous therefore and repent; least he come and fight against thee with the Sword Rev. 2. 16.
of his Mouth. Behold, (saith he) I stand at the Door and knock: If any Man hear my Voice, and open the Door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.
 Be not afraid therefore to go about this good work of Reformation, do thy Duty and leave the success to God, whose Blessing you may expect, and whose awful presence may so far attend the Authority of Christ by which you Act, as to stop the Mouth of carnal Reasonings; in-
 much that instead of indangering the loss of your Church-state, you may rather ex- Math. 16.
 pect, and find the Lord will strengthen, 18.
 establish and settle it on the Rock of A- Jam. 4. 8,
 ges, against which the Gates of Hell shall 9, 10.
 not prevail.

To close, Altho' I have used the Word [withdraw] in the Case of a Private Members removing Communion from a Church, which may not be done in so solemn a Manner as when a Church withdraws her Communion from a Member; (because this is done by an Act of Duty and Authority given to the Body, and the other is done as an Act of Liberty and Duty pertaining to a Member, and warranted by the Scriptures, as hath been shewed;) yet the Word withdraw, being it self of a harmless and indifferent Signification, it cannot be excepted against; un-

less it be for want of other Matters to
Cavil at: However I have also this to say
that the Word [with draw] was thought
proper to be used in the same Case as
the Congregational twenty eighth Article
of the Institution of Churches before re-
cited. *FINIS*

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